

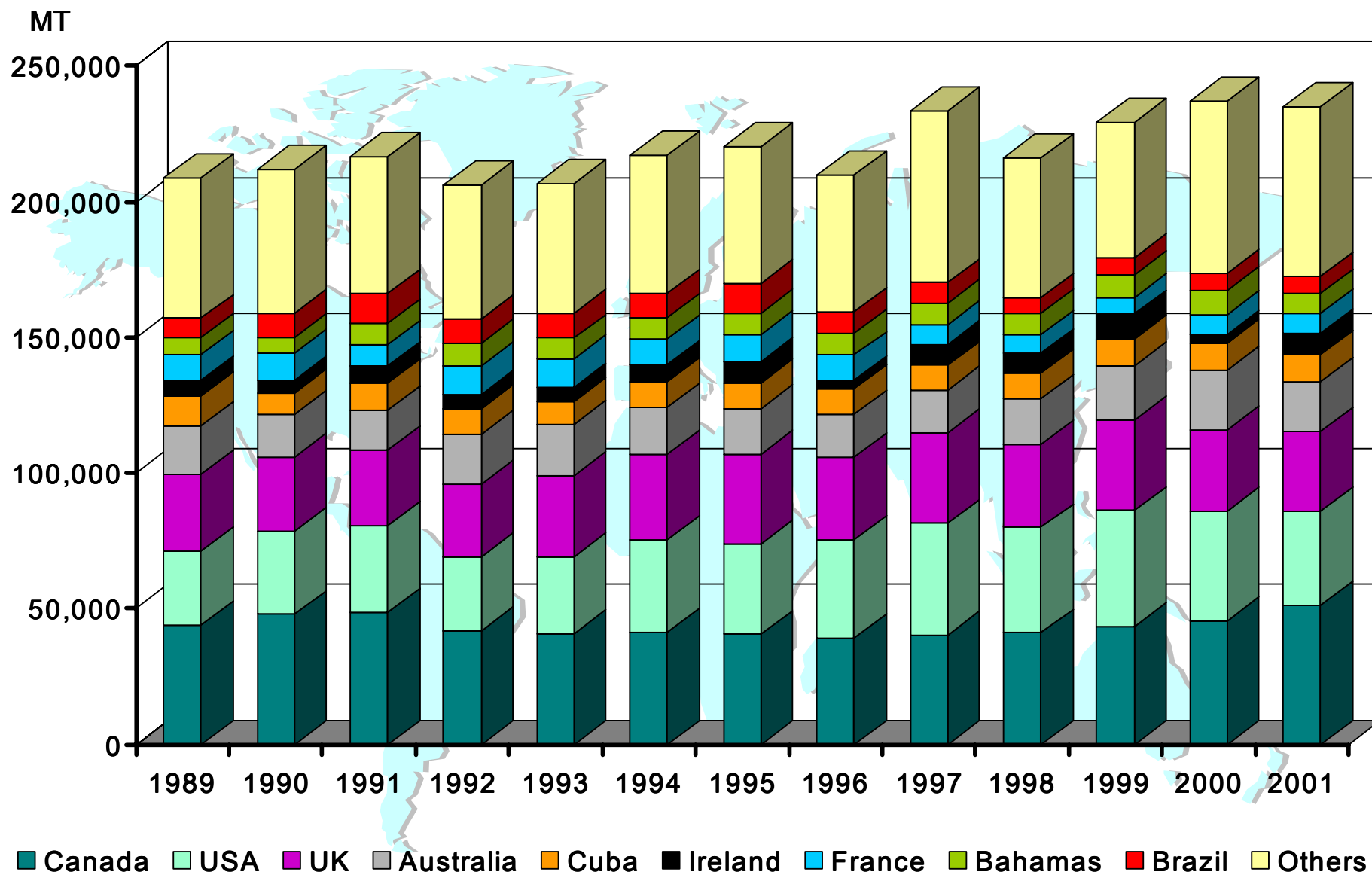
Trends in U.S. and World Lobster Production, Imports and Exports



Summary

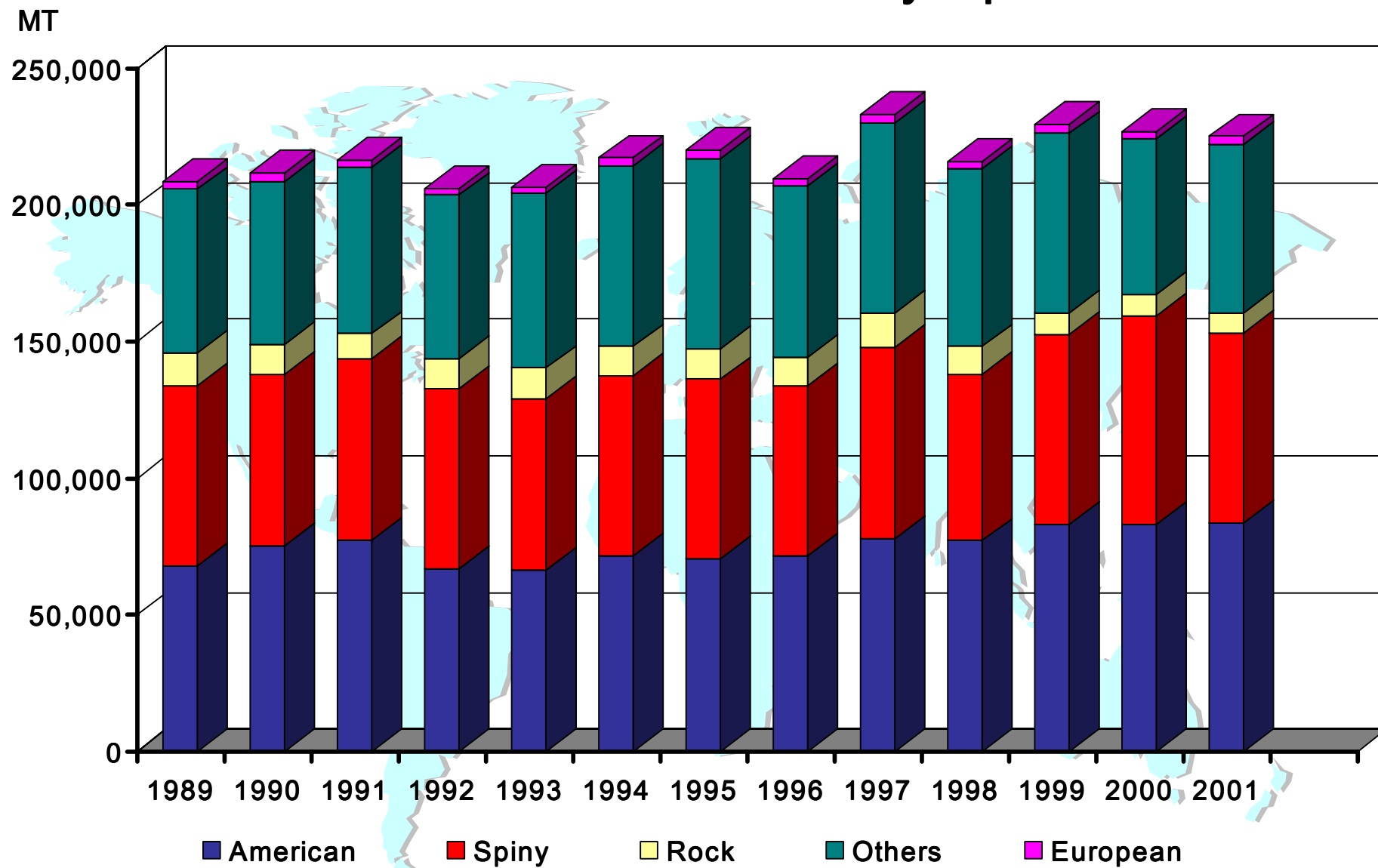
- World lobster production increased steadily from 157,000 metric tons in 1980 to more than 233,000 metric tons in 1997, before stabilizing at 227,000 metric tons in 2001. Wild lobster is by far the main source of total production, but aquaculture, although minimal, is growing. Catches of American lobster (*Homarus americanus*) and spiny lobster (*Panulirus spp.*) accounted for 68 percent of the world's lobster production in 2001. Other important species include European lobster (*Homarus gammarus*) and rock lobster (*Jasus spp.*).
- The United States and Canada are the world's largest lobster producing countries. Together, these two countries accounted for 37 percent of the total production in 2001. Other major producers are the United Kingdom, Australia, Cuba, Ireland, and France.
- In the United States, lobsters rank third in terms of commercial landed value for fishery products, trailing only the harvests of shrimp and crabs. American lobster accounted for 94 percent of U.S. lobster production, followed by spiny and slipper lobsters. Of the 37,094 metric tons landed in 2002, Maine led all states with 76 percent of the total harvest. Other important states are Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Spiny lobster is primarily harvested in Florida and California.
- World trade in lobster grew steadily over the last decade, as both exports and imports increased. World lobster exports rose 108 percent, from \$0.846 billion in 1989 to \$1.76 billion in 2001, due to increased sales of frozen and fresh/chilled products. Canada was the major exporter of live lobster products with \$299 million in 2001, followed by the United Kingdom with \$16 million, Belgium with \$6.6 million, and France with \$4.6 million. On the other hand, world lobster imports increased from \$1.04 billion in 1989 to \$1.875 billion in 2001, mainly due to increased demand for frozen and particularly live products in the hotel and restaurant sector. The United States was the major importer of live lobster products with \$247 million in 2001, followed by Canada with \$118 million, Japan with \$57 million, and Spain with \$44 million. The United States was again the largest importer of lobster products with \$836 million in 2001, or 44 percent of the global imports; followed by Japan with \$198 million, China with \$192 million, and Canada with \$137 million.
- U.S. lobster exports grew by 300 percent during 1989-2001, due to increased sales to Canada, which remains the most important market for U.S. lobster exports. U.S. exports to Canada are processed and then sent back to the U.S. market for domestic consumption or to be exported to other markets, mainly to the European Union. U.S. lobster imports rose 81 percent during 1989-2001, primarily from the purchase of live lobsters.
- Lobster is a high-priced commodity with consumer preferences varying from country to country.

World Lobster Production by Country



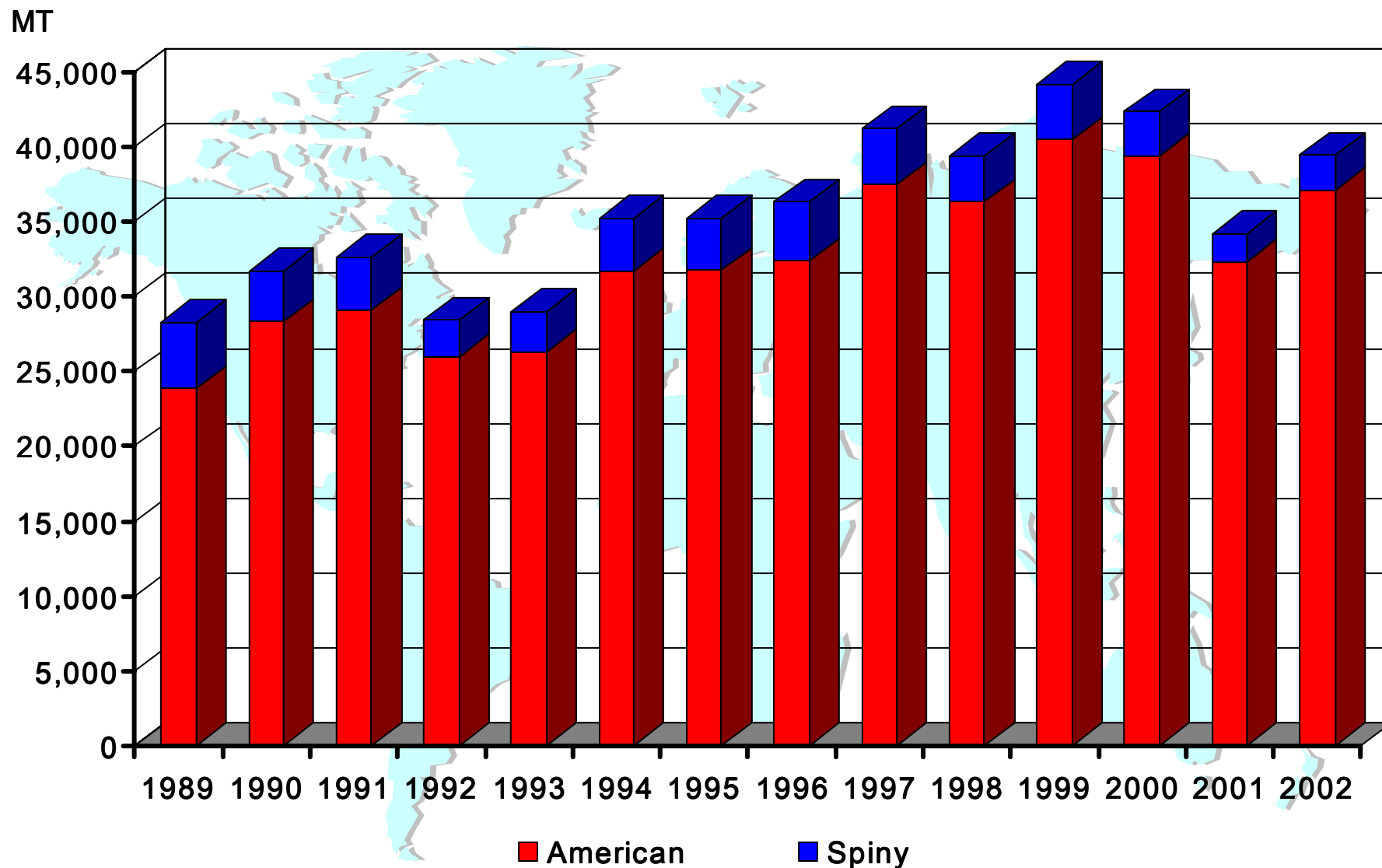
Source: FAO

World Lobster Production by Species



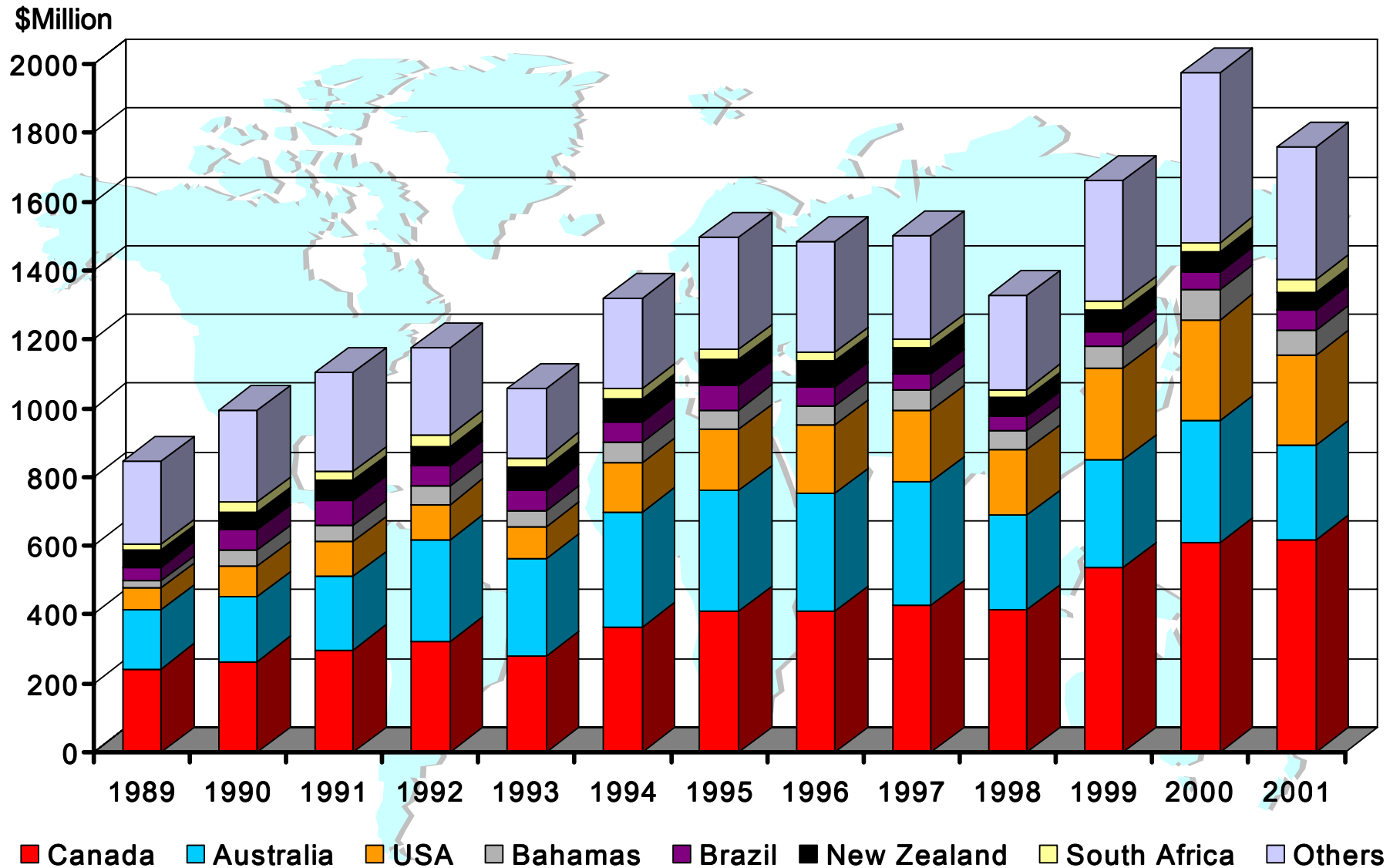
Source: FAO

U.S. Lobster Production by Species



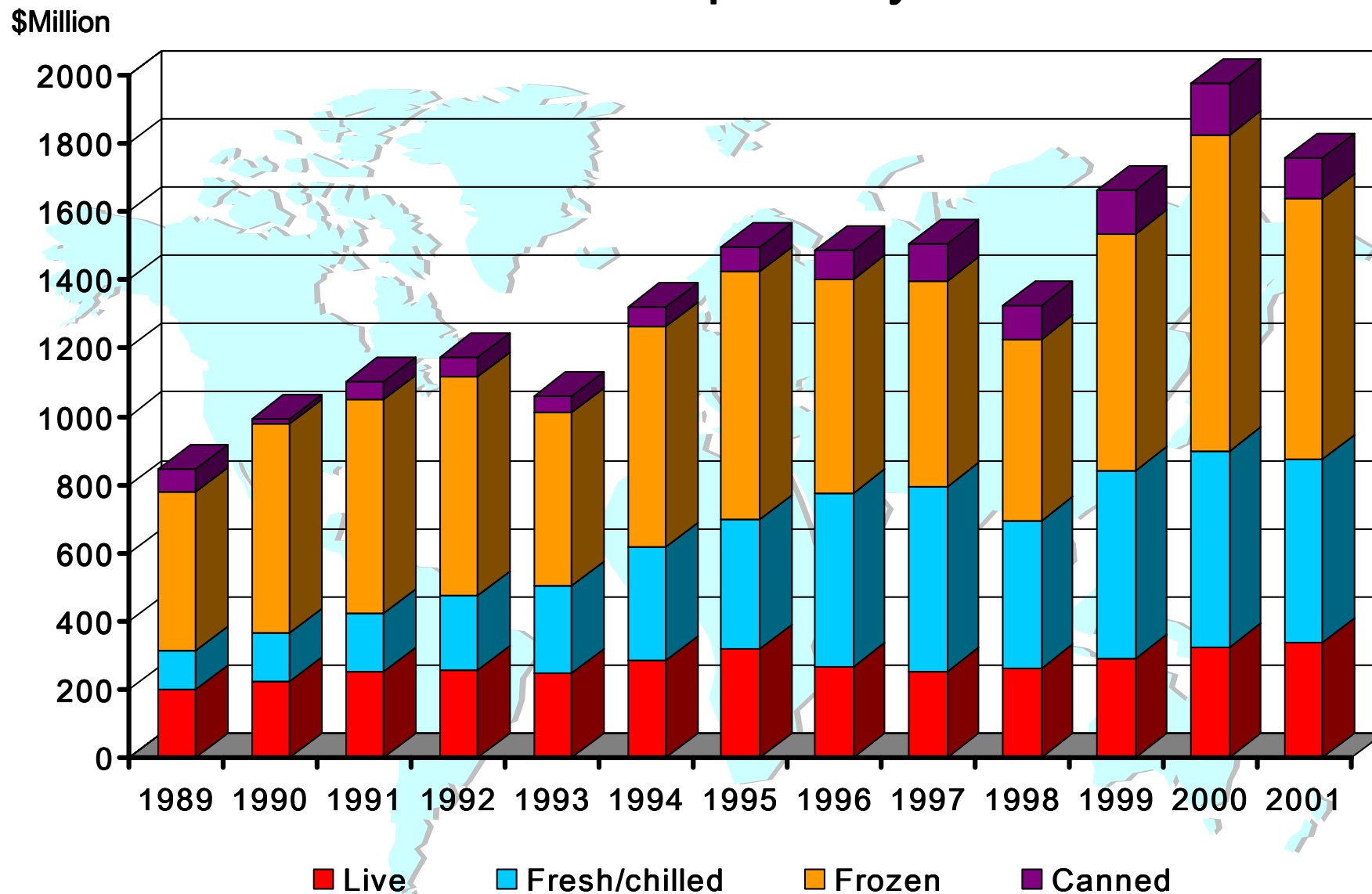
Source: NOAA/NMFS

World Lobster Exports by Country



Source: FAO

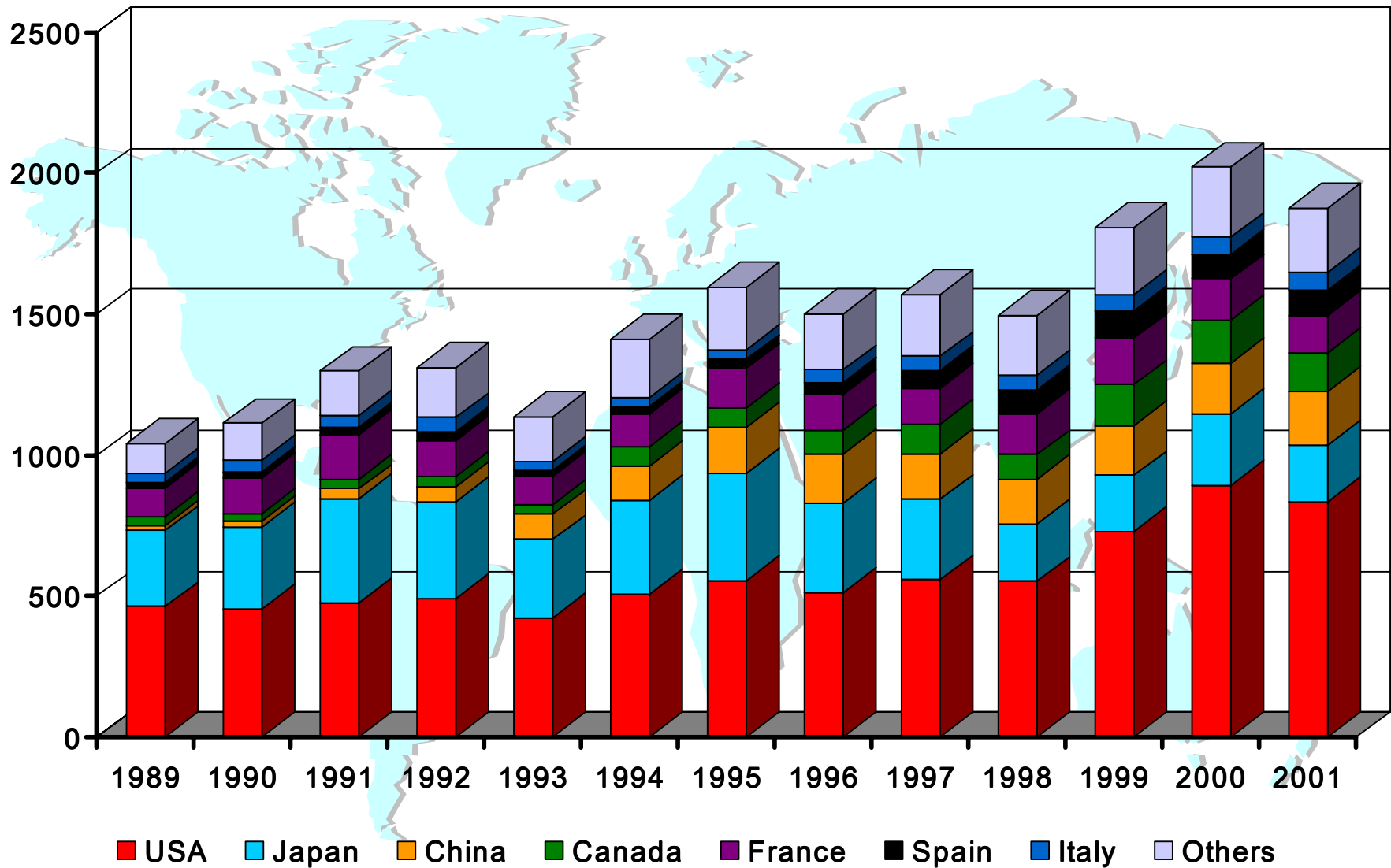
World Lobster Exports by Products



Source: FAO

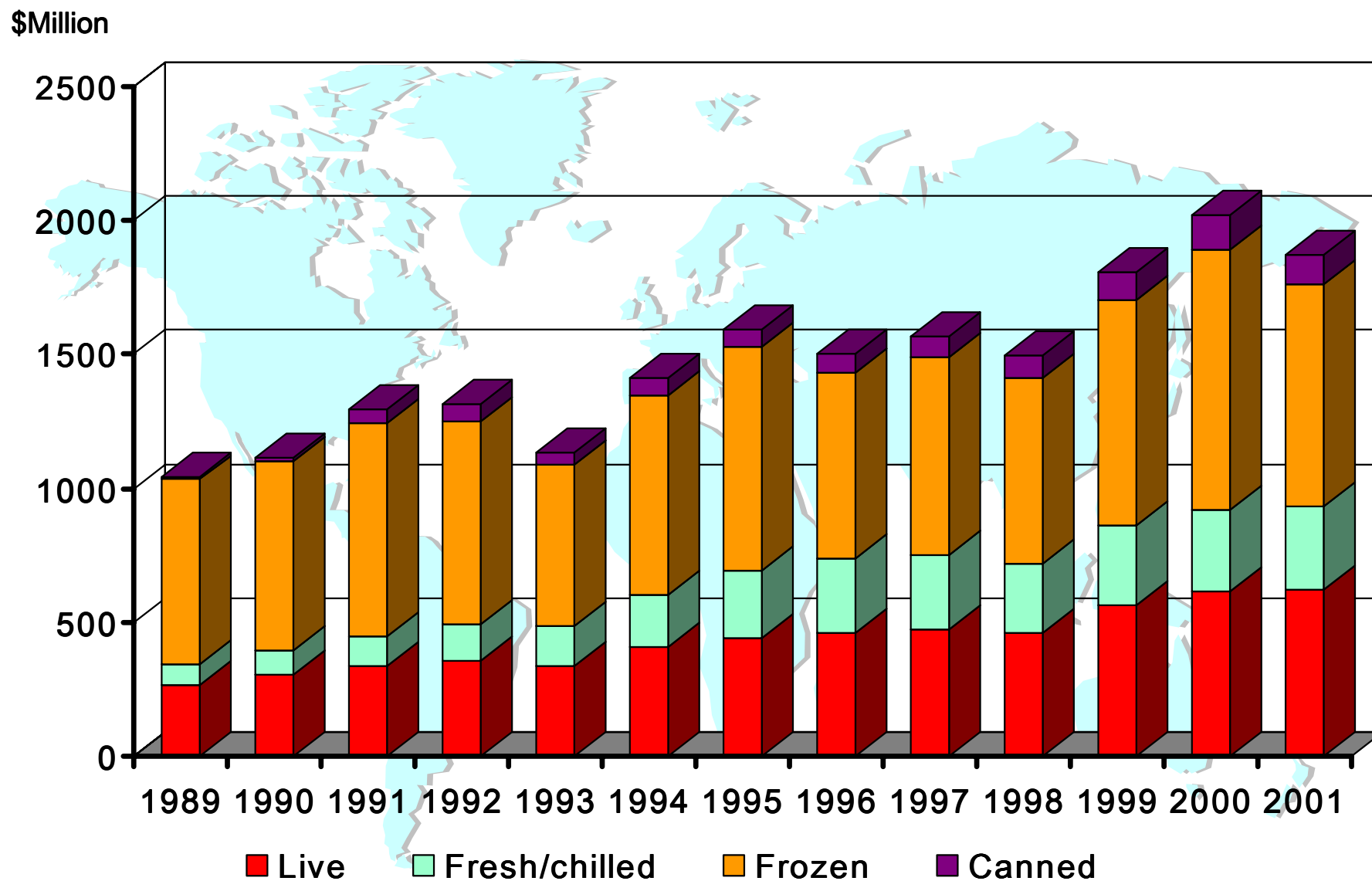
World Lobster Imports by Country

\$Million



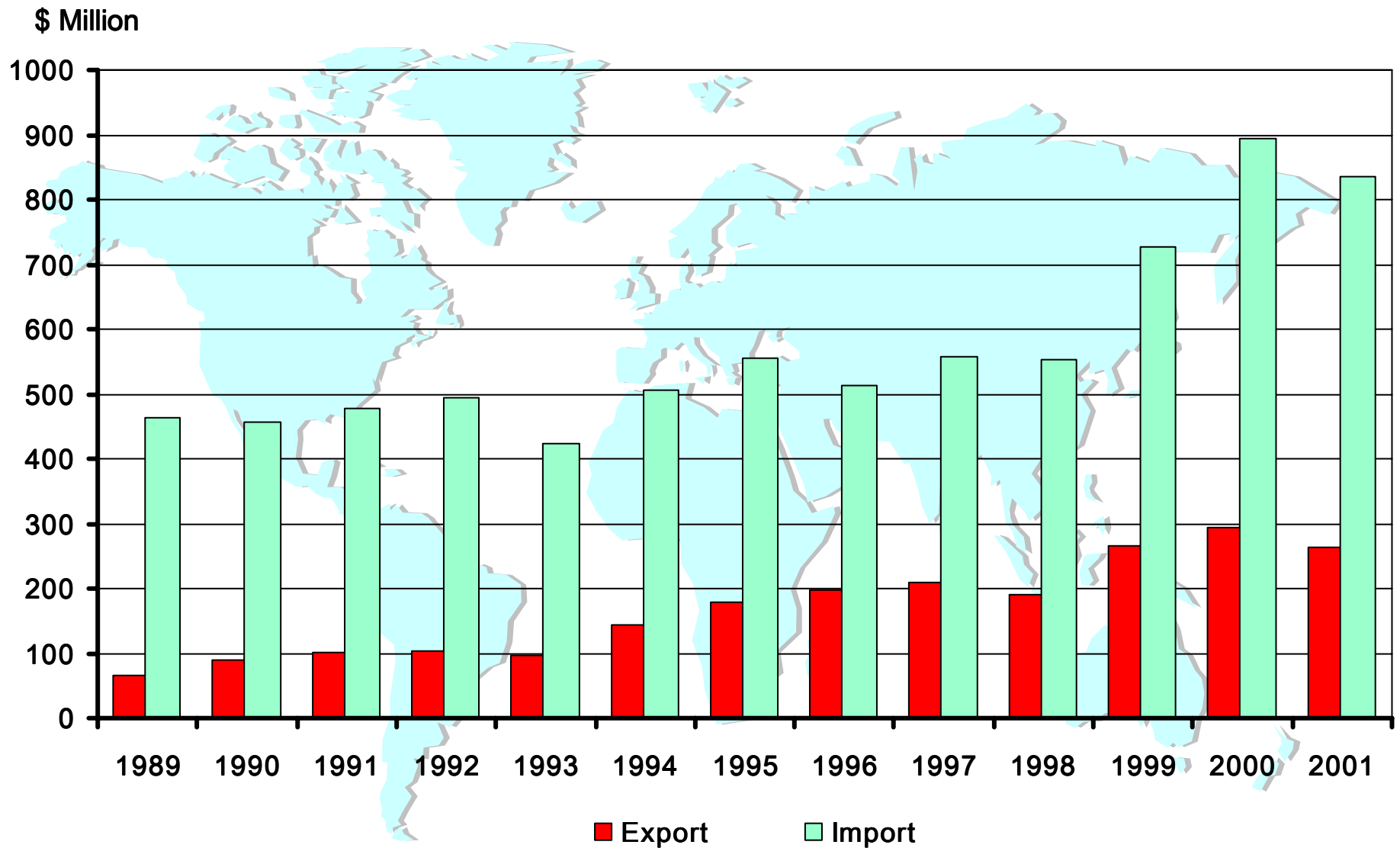
Source: FAO

World Lobster Imports by Products



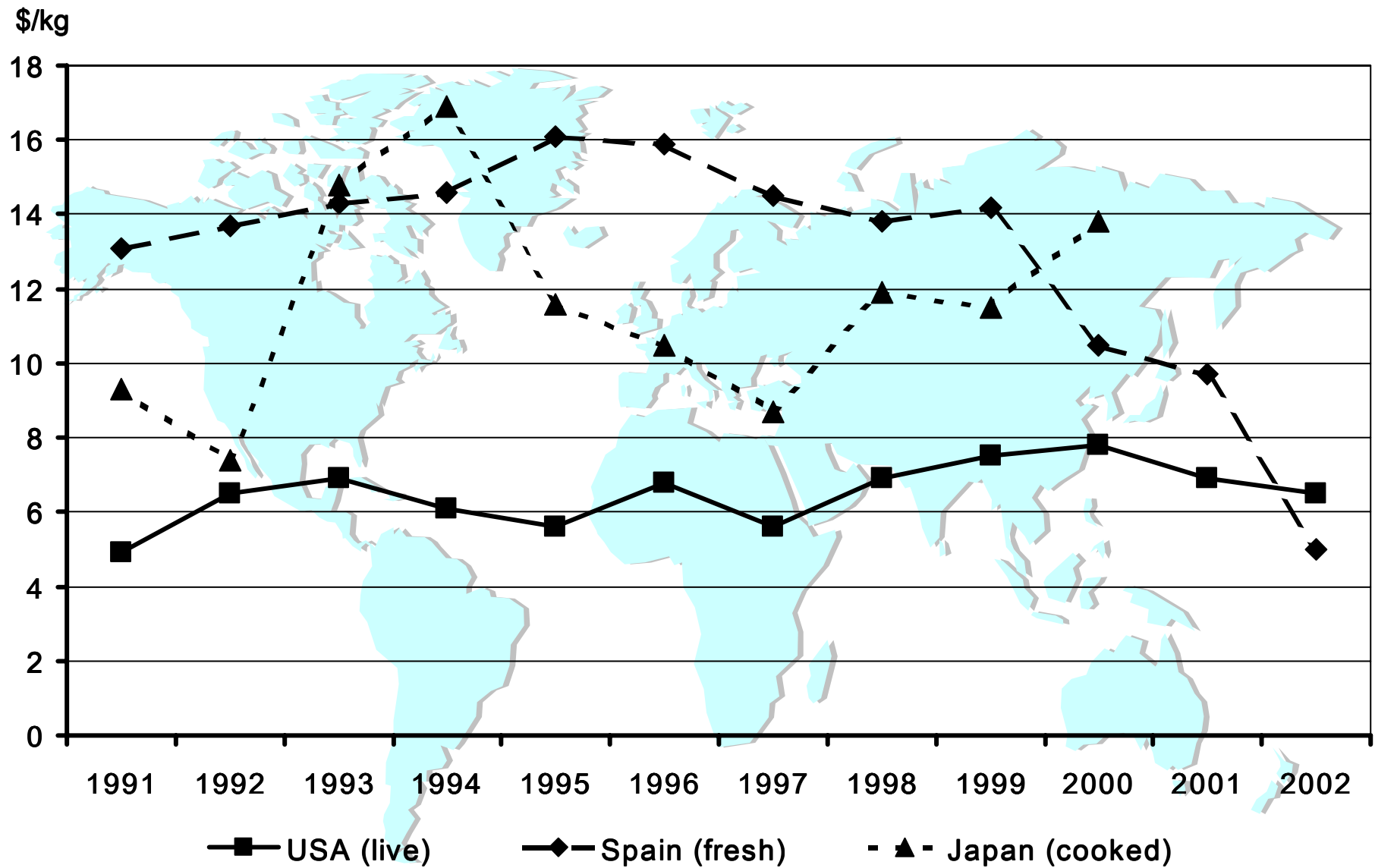
Source: FAO

U.S. Lobster Trade



Source: NOAA/NMFS

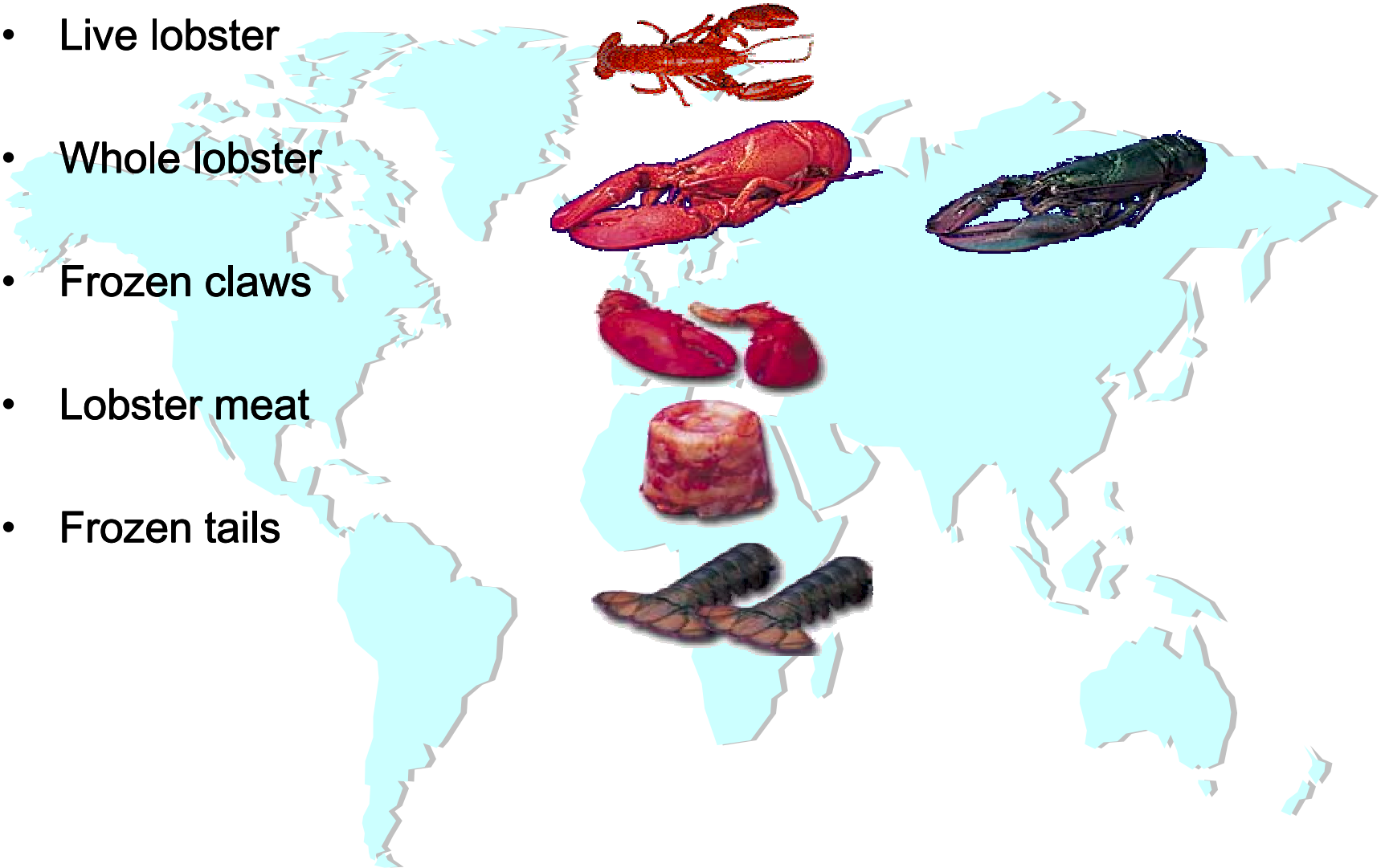
Lobster Prices in Selected Markets



Source: FAO

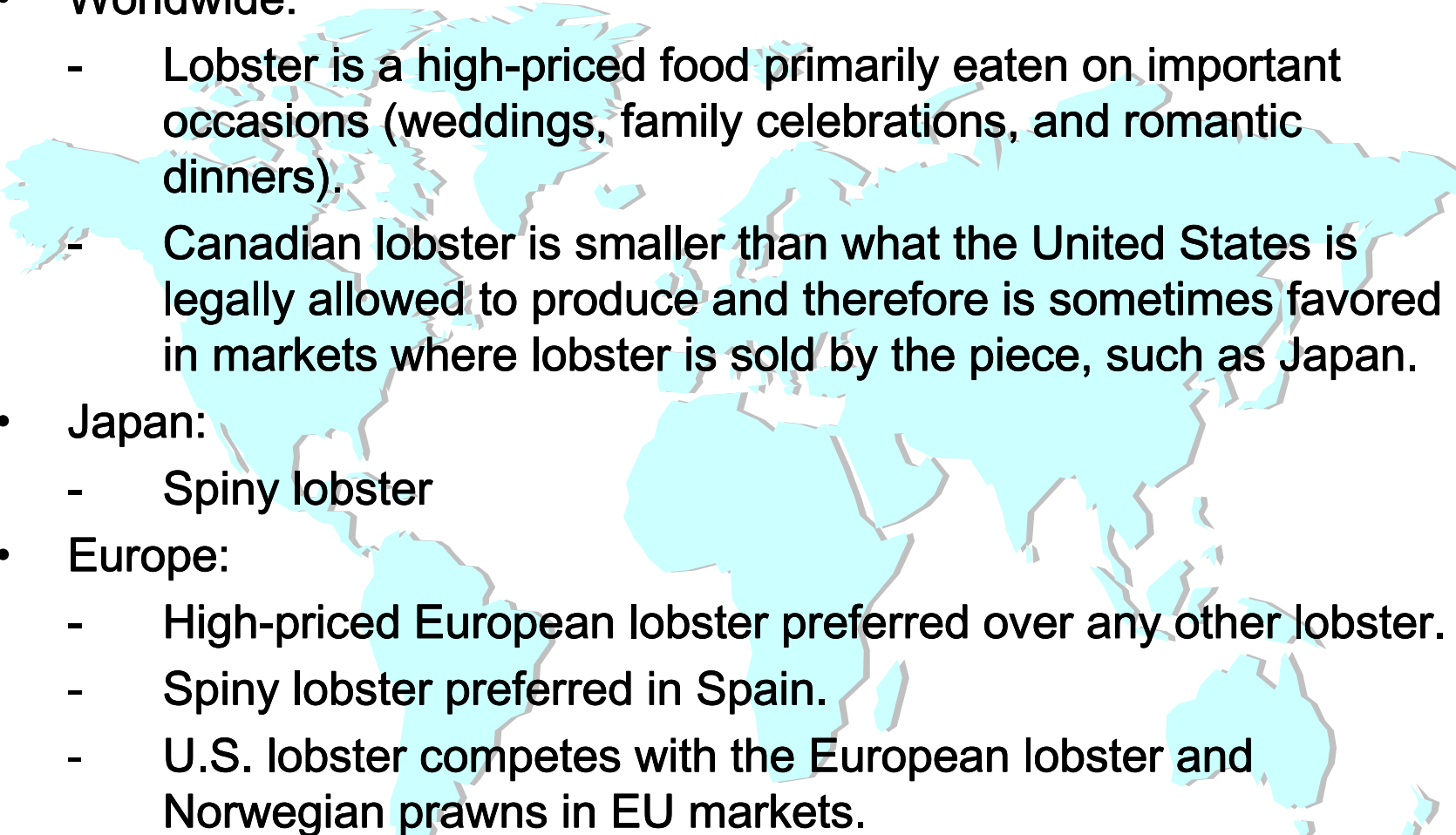
U.S. Lobster Products

- Live lobster
- Whole lobster
- Frozen claws
- Lobster meat
- Frozen tails



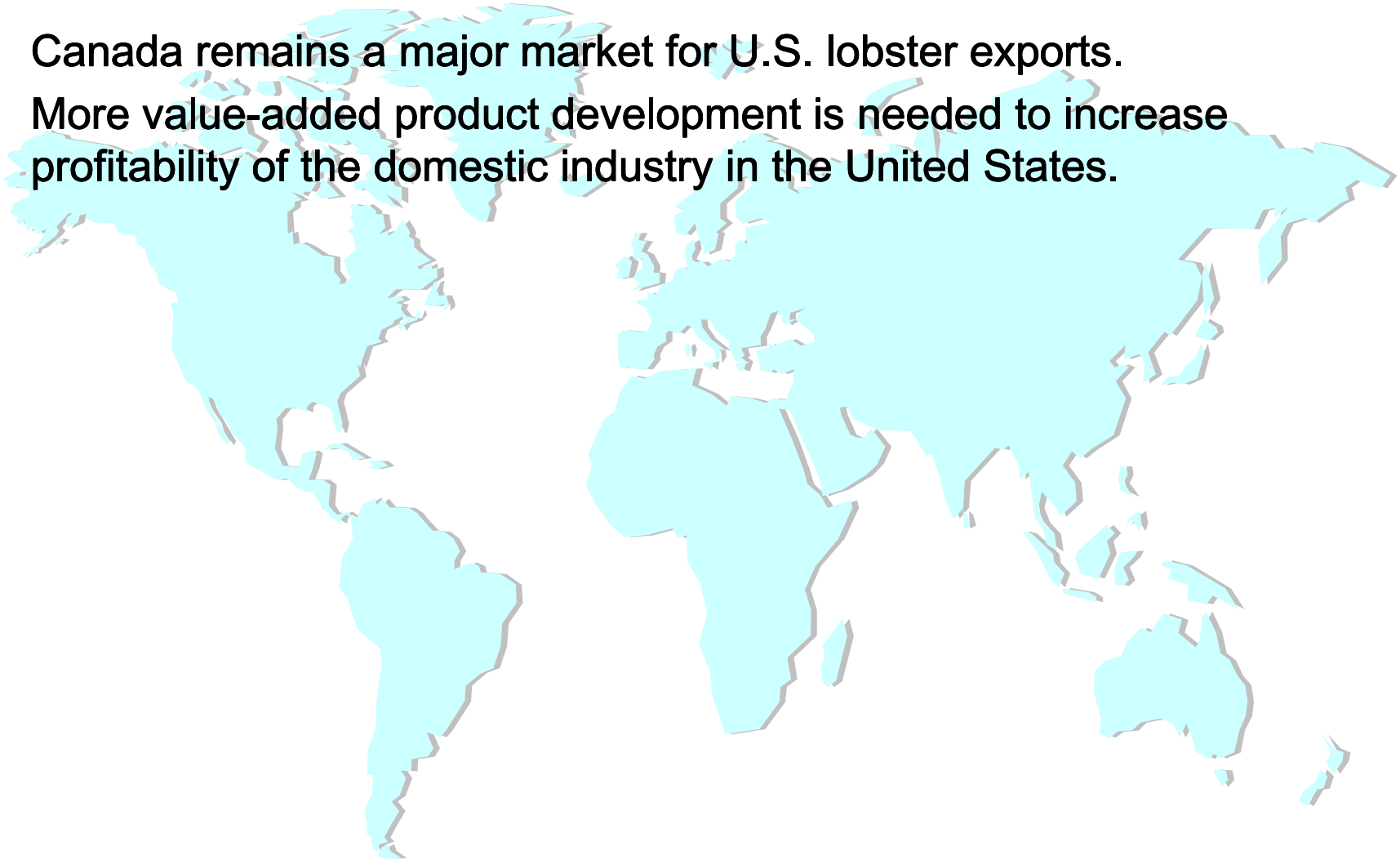
Source: Maine Lobster Processors Association

Consumer Preferences

- Worldwide:
 - Lobster is a high-priced food primarily eaten on important occasions (weddings, family celebrations, and romantic dinners).
 - Canadian lobster is smaller than what the United States is legally allowed to produce and therefore is sometimes favored in markets where lobster is sold by the piece, such as Japan.
 - Japan:
 - Spiny lobster
 - Europe:
 - High-priced European lobster preferred over any other lobster.
 - Spiny lobster preferred in Spain.
 - U.S. lobster competes with the European lobster and Norwegian prawns in EU markets.
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Recent Developments

- Canada remains a major market for U.S. lobster exports.
- More value-added product development is needed to increase profitability of the domestic industry in the United States.



U.S. Industry Contacts

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